

JOB

THE SUFFERING OF THE RIGHTEOUS

THE NAME: "JOB"

- * Meaning of "Job" - Hebrew: "Persecuted one" or Arabic: "Repentant one"
- * Judging by the style of the Hebrew it uses, some scholars judge Job to be the oldest book of the Old Testament.
- * The 1st of 5 Poetical books (Job - Song of Solomon)
- * The Book of Job is rightly understood to be a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry.
- * Its author is unknown although it is possible that Job himself recorded his experiences in the book, or there may well have been another anonymous author.
- * **Chapters:** 42
- * **Verses:** 1070

JOB: A HISTORICAL CHARACTER THE BIBLE

- * The style of the opening and close of the book certainly conform to other Biblical narratives that are historical (cf. [Job 1:1](#) with [1 Sam 1:1](#) and [Lk 1:5](#)).

The name Job is mentioned in other books of the Bible:

- * **Ezekiel 14:14,20. (vs.14)** - *“Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness, says the Lord God.”*
- * **James 5:10-11:** *“My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”*

Job - A Part of Inspired Scripture

- * Paul considered Job to be Scripture by quoting **Job 5:13** in **1 Corinthians 3:19**
- * Job mentions Adam, which is evidence that the story of Adam and Eve was recognized long before Moses wrote the book of Genesis ([Job 31:33](#)).

THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF JOB

Many scholars place the time of this book during the Patriarchs, approx. 2100 to 1900 BC.

These are some of the reasons:

- * Job's wealth was measured in livestock ([Job 1:3](#); [42:12](#)), as was Abraham's ([Genesis 12:16](#)) rather than silver and gold.
- * Like the patriarchs, Job used God's unique title "El Shaddai" (God Almighty).
- * There is No reference to Israel, the Exodus from Egypt, the Mosaic Law or the Tabernacle.
- * Like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Job himself, though not a priest, offered sacrifices—things not possible under the Law ([Leviticus 4:10](#); [Numbers 27:8](#)).
- * According to [Job 42:16](#), Job lived an additional 140 years after his tragedies occurred, perhaps to around 210 years total. His long lifespan generally corresponds to that of Terah (Abraham's father), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF JOB'S FRIENDS

Three friends of Job come to visit and comfort him:

1. **Eliphaz**, a Temanite.

Teman was a grandson of Esau ([Genesis 36:10, 11](#)).

2. **Bildad**, a Shuhite.

Shuah was a son of Abraham ([Genesis 25:2](#)).

3. **Zophar**, a Naamathite. Naamah was in northern Arabia

4. **Elihu**, a Buzite

Buz was evidently an Arab tribe ([Genesis 22:21](#)).

STYLES OF NARRATION

This book can be divided into 4 different styles of narration:

a. Prologue

Job 1:1-5 - Land of Uz; Job's prosperity and serenity

Job 1:6-12 - Heaven; Satan's slander of God and Job

Job 1:13-22 - Land of Uz; Job's loss of children and wealth

Job 2:1-6 - Heaven; God and Satan

Job 2:7-10 - Heaven; God and Satan

Job 2:11-13 - Three friends of Job come to visit and comfort him:

b. Dialogue

* Job's 3 friends are unable to endure the mystery of his suffering, so they jump to conclusions about its source.

* "Eliphaz the Temanite represents the view that—Job is being punished for his sins;

"Who that was innocent ever perished?" (4:7).

* Job's second friend, Bildad the Shuhite, says much the same.

"See, God will not reject a blameless person nor take the hand of evildoers" (Job 8:20).

* Zophar the Naamathite, repeats the refrain.

"If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, do not let wickedness reside in your tents. Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure, and will not fear....Your life will be brighter than the noonday" (Job 11:14-15, 17).

c. Monologue

Job 33-37 : Of Elihu

Job 38:1-42:6 : Of God

d. Epilogue

Job 42:7-17 - Land of Uz; Job's blessings doubled

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

JOB'S DISTRESS (Job 1-3)

- HIS PROSPERITY (Job 1:1-5)
- HIS ADVERSITY (Job 1:6-2:13)
- HIS PERPLEXITY (Job 3)

JOB'S DEFENSE (Job 4-37)

- **THE FIRST ROUND (Job 4-14)**
 1. Eliphaz (Job 4-5)_Job's reply (Job 6-7)
 2. Bildad (Job 8)_Job's reply (Job 9-10)
 3. Zophar (Job 11)_Job's reply (Job 12-14)
- **THE SECOND ROUND (Job 15-21)**
 1. Eliphaz (Job 15)_Job's reply (Job 16-17)
 2. Bildad (Job 18)_Job's reply (Job 19)
 3. Zophar (Job 20)_Job's reply (Job 21)
- **THE THIRD ROUND (Job 22-37)**
 1. Eliphaz (Job 22)_Job's reply (Job 23-24)

2. Bildad (Job 25)_Job's reply (Job 26-31)

• **YOUNG ELIHU SPEAKS (Job 32-37)**

1. Contradicting Job's friends (Job 32)
2. Contradicting Job himself (Job 33)
3. Proclaiming God's justice, goodness, and majesty (Job 34-37)

JOB'S DELIVERANCE (Job 38-42)

• **GOD HUMBLING JOB (Job 38:1-42:6)**

1. Through questions too great to answer (Job 38:1-41:34)
2. Job acknowledges his inability to understand (Job 42:1-6)

• **GOD HONORS JOB (Job 42:7-17)**

1. God rebukes his critics (Job 42:7-10)
2. God restores his wealth (Job 42:11-17)

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING

- * This is not a story of Rages to Riches but Riches to Rages
- * The book of Job deals with the age-old question: "Why do bad things happen to good people?"
- * We are privileged to know of the challenge of Satan, and that God allows Job to suffer in answer to that challenge, but Job is never told of this.
- * The book appears to have been written as a direct challenge to the time-honored doctrine that ***people are rewarded or punished according to their merits.***

- a) Job Has Not Lusted: 31:1-4
- b) Job Has Not Lied or Deceived: 31:5-8
- c) Job Has Not Committed Adultery: 31:9-12
- d) Job Has Not Failed to Help His Slaves: 31:13-15
- e) Job Has Not Failed to Help the Poor and Needy: 31:16-23
- f) Job Has Not Trusted in His Wealth: 31:24-25
- g) Job Has Not Turned to Idolatry: 31:26-28
- h) Job Has Not Treated His Enemies Unfairly: 31:29-30
- i) Job Has Not Been Stingy: 31:31-32
- j) Job Has Not Hidden His Sins: 31:33-34
- k) Job Wishes God Would Hear Him: 31:35-37
- l) Job Has Not Been Unfair to His Farm-workers 31:38-40

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING

- * The answer given to Job may or may not satisfy the reader.
- * God allows pain for good reason, but He may never reveal those reasons.
- * Job must deal with the fact that in his life, ***"God does not act the way he always thought God would and should act."***
- * The Book of Job is not so much a record of solutions and explanations to this problem
- * It is more a revelation of Job's experience and the answers carried *within* his experience.
- * It is a great lesson from God about trusting Him, even when we don't understand our circumstances.
- * Job teaches us that **God does not need our understanding and He does not owe us any explanation for His actions.**
- * We learn to put our trust in God and allow Him to work in our lives, regardless of our understanding of our circumstances.
- * **This book has 330 questions vs. 160 in Genesis**

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING ADDRESSED

Why do we suffer? Who or what causes it? Why doesn't God do something?

* Not all questions are answered, but some important points are made:

1. Man is unable to subject the painful experiences of human existence to a meaningful analysis -

- * God's workings are beyond man's ability to fathom.
- * Man simply cannot tie all the "loose ends" of the Lord's purposes together.
- * We must learn to trust in God, no matter the circumstances.

2. Suffering is not always the result of personal sin -

- * The erroneous conclusion drawn by Job's friends is that suffering is always a consequence of sin.
- * Job proves this is not the case.

3. Suffering may be allowed as a compliment to one's spirituality

- * God allowed Job to suffer to prove to Satan what kind of man he really was.
- * What confidence God had in Job!

USING THE BOOK OF JOB WITH CAUTION!

- * The speeches of Job's 3 friends include many inaccuracies
- * It primarily involves why God allows people to suffer.
- * Their overarching belief was that Job was suffering because he had done something wrong.
- * As a result, they repeatedly encourage Job to admit his wrong and repent so that God would bless him again.
- * God clearly condemned their advice: *"I am angry with you [Eliphaz] and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me"* ([Job 42:7](#)).
- * For this reason, we should always be careful about how we interpret individual verses from Job.
- * It is unwise to pull an isolated verse from the [book of Job](#) and use it to understand God—if the verse comes from a speech of Eliphaz, Bildad, or Zophar
- * then we have no guarantee that it accurately reflects the character of God.

INTERESTING SCIENTIFIC FACTS IN JOB

1. Space is Empty: [Job 26:7]

"He...hangs the earth upon nothing"

In ancient times it was variously believed that the earth sat on a large animal or a giant, or even that a mythical Atlas supported the pillars that held heaven and earth apart, and/or carried the earth around on his shoulders

2. An Expanding Universe: [Job 9:8]

"He alone spreads out the heavens..."

- * During the early 20th century, most scientists (including Einstein) believed the universe was static.
- * Others believed it should have collapsed due to gravity.
- * Then in 1929, astronomer Edwin Hubble showed that distant galaxies were receding from the earth, and the further away they were, the faster they were moving.
- * This discovery revolutionized the field of astronomy.

3. The Earth's Rotation: [Job 38:12,14]

"It takes on form like clay under a seal..."

- * For ages, scientists believed in a geocentric view of the universe.
- * The differences between night and day were believed to be caused by the sun revolving around the earth.
- * Today, we know that the earth's rotation on its axis is responsible for the sun's rising and setting.
- * The picture here is of a clay vessel being turned or rotated upon the potter's wheel—an accurate analogy of the earth's rotation

INTERESTING SCIENTIFIC FACTS

4. Gravitational Properties of Constellations: [Job 38:31]

"Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, Or loose the belt of Orion?"

- * The Pleiades star cluster is gravitationally bound, while the Orion star cluster is loose and disintegrating because the gravity of the cluster is not enough to bind the group together.

5. Springs under the Seas: [Job 38:16]

"Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the recesses of the deep?"

- * Hydrothermal vents are found in areas of the ocean floor where molten magma then rises from deep inside the Earth, superheating the cold ocean water around it.
- * The first underwater hot spring to be discovered was in 1977, at a depth of 2.5 km, off the coast of Ecuador.

6. Air has Weight (Job 28:25).

"For He looks to the ends of the earth, And sees under the whole heavens, To establish a weight for the wind, And apportion the waters by measure."

- * Science did not discover this until the 1600's

7. Light has a way (Job 38:19 / Job 38:35)

"Where is the way where light dwells?" "Can you send out lightnings, that they may go, and say to you, 'Here we are!'"

- * This wasn't discovered until 1864 that light (electromagnetic radiation) has a "way," traveling at 186,000 miles per second.